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John C. Brown
Secretary of the Navy
TO THE PUBLIC.

HAVING been compelled by circumstances to publish **LIEUTENANT JOSIAH TATTNALL**, of the United States' Navy, as a *calumniator* and a *coward*, it is perhaps due from me to the public, and my friends here and abroad, to give a statement of the circumstances which have led to the unpleasant collision between us. However confident a man may be that the injury he may have received is of a character to justify the means of redress resorted to by him—however conscious he may be that his cause is supported by well defined principles of justice—and however satisfied, that he has observed a due regard to moderation and forbearance,—if he be actuated by those feelings of self-esteem, and respect for the opinions of others, which should entitle him to public consideration, he must be solicitous to place his conduct, in all controversial cases, in its proper light before those whose judgment he invokes. Such being my views, I submit, with all proper deference to the good opinion of the American people, the following remarks to their attention, and bespeak for them an impartial hearing.

I had occasion, in March last, to communicate, through a friend, with **GEORGE LAW**, of the city of Baltimore, and learned through that friend, in the course of the interviews which ensued, that *Law* stated that Lieutenant *Tattnall* had published in a Savannah paper, a communication containing reflections derogatory to my character, connected with the report which I had made, of the cutting out of a *Buenos Ayrean* privateer, by the United States' ship *Erie*, better than two years prior to that period. As so long a time had elapsed, and this was the first intimation I had ever received of the existence of such a communication, I was disposed to doubt the correctness of the information,—and the more especially—coming as it did from a man whom I knew to be *tainted with dishonor*, and whom I believed capable of ut-

tering any falsehoods, however gross they might be, so they subserved his own malignant purposes, or screened him for the time from the punishment he deserved. But as I was not willing to rest quietly under undeserved imputations, and thought it *possible* that, if Lieutenant *Tattnall* had assailed my character, it had, probably, been so done under mistaken views, and that when he should be convinced of his error, as a brave and magnanimous man, he would take pleasure in doing me justice, by withdrawing the *offensive words*. I accordingly wrote to two friends in Savannah, requesting them to examine the files of papers published there, for the communication in question. Their answers to my letters are both before me, and concur in stating, that they were unable to find any article of the kind described to my friend by *Law*. Failing thus to obtain the information I desired, and seeing the *arrival* of Lieutenant *Tattnall* announced, in the latter part of September last, I addressed him the following letter—[without date, though written Sept. 27, 1831.]

CAPT. CHASE TO LIEUT. TATTNALL.

To Lieut. Comm. Tattnall—

SIR: Having seen your arrival announced in the paper of this morning, I avail myself of the earliest opportunity to ask of you if any communication was written by you in '29, and published in the Savannah Georgian, wherein my name was mentioned (not in a very respectful manner as I have understood), and if so, on what authority was that communication wrote.

From your standing in the Navy, and from what I have heard of you from your friend, Genl. C. R. Floyd, of Georgia, and others, and from the information I have got from the Georgian office, I am induced to believe that no such communication was ever penned by you against me; that Geo. Law, the author of an anonymous pamphlet and other anonymous calumnies against me, having been discovered and called on for satisfaction, made use of the following extract in his letter to my friend, Col. Brearly, as a subterfuge to save himself from the responsibility under which he found himself.

(Here follows the Extract)

“Moreover, that you could not know of the imputations against Capt. C. contained in a communication from Lieut. Tattnall, of the U. S. Navy, which was published in a Savannah newspaper (the Georgian) shortly after Capt. Chase's arrival there in the Congress, from a cruise, and which imputations Capt. C. has never attempted to refute, though called on in so public a manner to do if he dared.”

As this was the first intimation I ever had of such a communication, I immediately wrote to two of my friends in Savannah, who assured

me that they had free access to the records of the Georgian office, as well as the assistance of the clerks, and that they could trace no such communication as alluded to by Law; that there was a communication wrote by you against the Federal, Capt. Taylor, but that there was nothing ill-natured in it against me. Thus, you see I could not reply to a communication without knowing its contents, and which perhaps never existed. To this I must beg your immediate reply, whether in the negative or affirmative. If you have wrote such a communication I believe that you will unhesitatingly acknowledge it, and the authority that justified such a proceeding.

Very respectfully,

Your obt. serv't.

JOHN CHASE.

To the above letter I received the following reply :

*Middletown, Connecticut,
7th October, 1831.*

SIR:—I have received a communication, without date, from you, and reply to it at Baltimore, presuming that to be your residence. I shall answer your inquiries as briefly as possible.

In 1829, when at Pensacola, I saw in the Savannah Georgian a publication by a Captain Chase, commanding the Buenos Ayrean Privateer Congresso, containing gross misstatements respecting the capture of the Federal by the U. S. ship Erie, of which ship I was the First Lieutenant and which publication required contradiction.

I immediately forwarded to the editor of the Georgian a true statement of the circumstances attending the capture of the Federal, accompanied by such remarks as I considered the misstatements and apparent motives of Capt. Chase justified.

The files of the Georgian can furnish my communication.

Although since that period much has been said reflecting upon the general character of Capt. Chase, I have heard nothing which led me for a moment to suppose that *personal apprehension* was the cause of his not having noticed my communication.

I am sir, your obt serv't,

JOSIAH TATTNALL.

CAPT. JOHN CHASE.

The evasive character of this letter, and its unfounded assumptions as to the nature of my *report* of the affair between the *Erie* and the *Federal*, increased my anxiety to be placed in possession of *his communication*, and I forthwith addressed a third letter to Savannah, Georgia, to procure a copy of it, as well as of *my own report*; and being unable to procure papers containing them, my friend sent me the following *notarial copies*, to which I beg leave to call the attention of the reader.

Extract from the Georgian, dated Savannah, December 25th, 1828.

From the West Indies.—Capt. Chase of the Buenos Ayrean Privateer *Congresso*, arrived yesterday from a cruise in the West Indies, states that in the first week of this month the U. States ship *Erie*, Capt. Turner, with General Harrison, our Minister, on board, touched at St. Barts, where a Buenos Ayrean schooner was lying, having some time before taken some Brazillian property from an American vessel, which property Capt. Turner demanded, saying the flag covered it. A court was held, when Capt. Taylor, of the B. A. schooner producing proof of its being enemy's property, the authorities refused to deliver it. Capt. Turner then manned his boats at night and cut the vessel out; in doing which he was fired upon by the fort, which compelled the *Erie* to slip her cable and put to sea. She proceeded to St. Martins with her prize, and from thence to Colombia to land Gen. Harrison. A representation of these facts, Capt. C. says, has been forwarded to our Government.

The *Congresso* about the 10th October, cruising in company with brig *Presidentia*, Capt. Clark, a little east of the Western Isles, fell in with a piratical herm. brig, of about 200 tons—chased her for fifteen hours, and fired several shot which were returned without showing her colours; but she escaped in the dark.—She appeared to mount 5 guns with 50 men, and answered the description of a vessel that had robbed vessels of all nations in that vicinity.

The *Presidentia*, a few days after, captured an armed schooner, manned by Spaniards, having Danish papers. Two other sets were thrown overboard—crew acknowledged they had robbed two American vessels. The vessel and crew were carried into St. Eustatia, and sent from thence by Capt. Clarke to St. Thomas for trial. On board were found some American money, and the uniform of an American officer, and his watch, with his name (Lieut. Farley) engraved on it.

I do hereby certify the foregoing an exact copy from the paper called *The Savannah Georgian*, under date of the 25th December, 1828.

[L. s.] Given under my hand and Notarial Seal, this 3d Nov. 1831;

JOS. S. PELOT,

Not. Pub.

To the Editors of the Georgian:

The following is an answer to a statement published in this city on the 25th of December last. We all freely accord respect to the gallant American, who, influenced by a love of military renown, or a generous sympathy for the struggling patriots of other climes, perils his life in the cause of liberty.—But for him who expatriates himself with the base purpose of pecuniary exaction, and joining the conflict for no achievement but its spoil, we would invoke the bitterest imprecations. He is deservedly more execrable than the avowed buccaneer, who boldly displays the red banner of rapine, and jeopard's his neck unpro-

ted by *colourable* rights or prostituted flags, with no law but his will, and no shield but his sword.

"I observe in one of the Florida gazettes, an extract from the Savannah papers, giving an account of the capture of the schooner *Federal*, as furnished by a Capt. Chase, of a Buenos Ayrean privateer. It appears to be the object of this statement, to reflect on Capt. Turner, of the U. States' ship *Erie*; I request you, therefore, to insert the following statement of all the facts attending the capture. When at the island of St. Martin's, Capt. Turner received a communication from our consul at St. Barts, stating that a Buenos Ayrean privateer was in that port, which had taken 90 bales of goods from an American brig, under the plea that the property was Brazillian, and urging that we should visit that island for the purpose of recovering it. Capt. Turner instantly complied with his wishes, and on our arrival demanded the privateer from the government, on the ground of her having committed piracy on our commerce. They refused to deliver her up, requiring us to furnish proof of her having committed piracy; in which case they would themselves proceed against her. This decision was made by a council consisting of four persons, three of whom Captain Turner *knew* to be agents for privateers, and *one of them the agent of the very vessel we were demanding.*

"We were informed from a source not to be doubted, that St. Barts had been long famous for the encouragement held out to the South American privateers, many of which have been for the last year no better than freebooters;—The authorities had doubtless derived benefit from the sale of property captured by them. From this charge I should except the governor of the town, who has only a voice in the council, and against whose character I have never heard any thing urged. Capt. Turner was convinced that the object of the authorities was to evade our demands, as they knew from him, that the *Erie* could not remain another day at St. Barts, having to return to St. Martins for Gen. Harrison. The privateer was refitting for another cruise, and Capt. Turner determined to prevent any further injury to our commerce, by taking possession of her. This was done at midnight, by the boats of the ship.

"In standing out of the harbour, the schooner was brought in a line with the ship, and the latter was therefore in danger of suffering from the fire of the fort. As Captain Turner had no wish to injure either the fort, or town of St. Barts, he slipped his cable, and stood out after the schooner;—had he remained at his anchorage, and their fire continued, he must have returned it, which could not have been done without the loss of lives to the inhabitants of the town. The *Erie* slipped, instead of weighing, as the strength of the winds and the weakness of her crew, rendered weighing almost impossible. Capt. Turner's wish was to get possession of the schooner, without injury to the inhabitants.

"The statement referred to says, that the schooner was cut out immediately after Capt. T. had dined with the Governor. *This is not*

the truth. He had declined dining with him, although previously engaged to do so. Nor was the final answer of the government received until late in the evening.

“The object of the statement is evidently to convey the idea, that the most friendly intercourse subsisted between the authorities and himself, and that he had taken advantage of the security in which he had lulled them to effect his object. Such an insinuation is as *basely false* as it is unjust. If the author of the paragraph feels offended at the freedom of these remarks, and wishes the name of the author for any other purpose than for a newspaper controversy, he can obtain it by calling on the editors.”

I, *Joseph S. Pelot*, a public notary in and for the county of Chatham, in the state of Georgia, residing in the city of Savannah, do hereby certify, that the foregoing is a copy of a publication which appeared in the *Savannah Georgian*, under date of the 3d February, 1830.

[L. S.] Given under my hand and seal this third day of November,
1831.

JOS. S. PELOT,
Not. Pub.

The report which I made on my arrival at *Savannah* in command of the Buenos Ayrean privateer, the *Congresso*, in December, 1828, was so made at the instance of the editor of the *Georgian*: had it been made voluntarily on my part, it would have been but in conformity with a custom as old as newspapers themselves; but, upon this occasion, my report was *solicited*—the information it contained had been communicated to me at a neighboring island, to the one in which the affair to which it related occurred, and was faithfully narrated. I gave it without comment, feeling no disposition either to question Capt. Turner’s conduct, or to indulge in a solitary reflection which might be injurious to his standing as a gentleman or an officer. As I received the facts, I gave them. Of the transaction I had no personal knowledge whatever and knew little or nothing of the *Federal*, her officers or crew. I had no pecuniary interest in the case one way or the other—and while the relation which I bore to *Buenos Ayres*, as an officer in her Navy, impressed me with the most lively sensibility in whatever concerned the honor of her service—my affection for the land which gave me birth, and beneath whose soil the bones of my ancestors reposed, awakened in me emotions of a kindred nature, and induced me to hope that the good name of neither had been compromitted in the transaction. Thus animated, under the circumstances described, I made the report

which has so unfortunately aroused the *pretended* indignation of Lieut. Tattnall.

With a view of shewing how wantonly and unprovoked Lt. Tattnall indulged in his vituperations against me, I will divest his "*answer*," as he calls it, of the senseless verbiage of which its introduction consists, and by placing our two statements in juxta-position, prove by his own words, that the truth of every fact stated by me is established by his voluntary testimony.

I STATED IN MY REPORT:— That in the month of December, 1828, the U. S. ship *Erie* touched at St. Barts, where a Buenos Ayrean schooner was lying, having some time before taken some Brazillian property from an American vessel, which property Capt. Turner demanded, saying the flag covered it. A court was held, when Capt. Taylor of the B. A. schooner producing proof of its being enemy's property; the authorities refused to deliver it. Captain Turner then *manned his boats at night, and cut the vessel out*, in doing which he was fired upon by the fort, which compelled the *Erie* to *slip her cable* and put to sea. She proceeded to St. Martins with her prize, and from thence to Colombia to land General Harrison. A representation of these facts, Capt. C. says, has been forwarded to our government.

LT. TATTNALL STATES:— that "when at the island of St. Martin's, Captain Turner received a communication from our Consul at St. Barts, stating that a Buenos Ayrean privateer was in that port, which had taken 90 bales of goods from an American brig, under the plea that the property was Brazillian, and urging that we should visit that island for the purpose of recovering it. Capt. Turner *instantly* complied with his wishes, and on our arrival demanded the privateer from the government on the ground of her having committed piracy* on our commerce— They refused to deliver her up, requiring us to furnish proof of her having committed piracy; in which case they would themselves proceed against her. Capt. Turner was convinced that the object of the authorities was to evade our demands, as they knew from him that the *Erie* could not remain another day at St. Barts, having to return to St. Martin's for General Harrison. The privateer was fitting for another cruise, and Captain Turner determined to prevent any further injury to our commerce, by taking possession of her. This was done at *midnight* by the boats

* Lieutenant Tattnall is grossly in error—Captain Turner did not "*instantly*" demand the delivery of the Privateer for having committed piracy—it was not until after the refusal of Governor Haesum, to comply with his *FIRST* demand, that he placed his requisition upon that ground.

of the ship. In standing out of the harbour, the schooner was brought in a line with the ship, and the latter was therefore, in danger of suffering from the fire of the fort. As Capt. Turner had no wish to injure either the fort, or town of St. Barts, he *slipped his cable*, and stood out after the schooner."

I ask every candid and impartial mind, whether there is a single fact averred by me, which is not sustained, to the very letter, by the *reply* of Lieutenant Tattnell? As he has, himself, unasked, corroborated every thing stated by me, the questions occur with the greater force, why did he impugn my motives? Why did he impute to me allegations against the *Erie*, which so far from having been made, were never conceived by me? The answers to these questions might lead me to the discussion of questions which it is my purpose now to avoid; but it may become me to reply to the charges he has so ungraciously brought against me.

He states *first*, that the object of my statement was to reflect upon Captain Turner. If this had been true, it was the business of Captain Turner, and not of his froward Lieutenant to resent it. But I deny all such intention. Towards Captain Turner I entertained no other than kindly feelings. And in making my report, I confined myself to a simple detail of the facts as they had been represented to me, and purposely abstained from indulging in a single comment. My object in so doing was of a two-fold character. As a Captain in the Navy of the Buenos Ayrean government, whose vessel of war had been captured in a friendly and neutral port, I duly appreciated the delicacy of my situation—but the strongest motive which influenced my mind, was a desire to avoid every remark which could possibly forestall public opinion to the prejudice of either of the parties. I knew that judges and jurors were but men—and were,—partaking of the weaknesses of our nature,—liable to imbibe the feelings by which they were surrounded—and as I felt convinced that the case would come on for legal adjudication, I was determined that no act of mine should interpose to divert the current of justice from its rightful course. Such motives appear never to have entered into the calculations of Lieutenant Tattnell—they are probably too elevated to be grasped by a mind so grovelling. His aim was evidently of another cast: for, in

order to produce an excitement which should operate to the prejudice of the officers of the Federal, he imputed to my report a character it did not deserve, and in his ascription of false motives to me, he indulged in a spirit no less uncharitable than unmerited towards me—a spirit no less reckless of the courtesies of a gentleman than it was prodigal of falsehood. As I did not reflect on Captain Turner, and as Lieutenant Tattnell knew in making the charge against me he was doing me an act of injustice and wrong, without the colour of excuse for doing so, he could have been moved by no higher motive than that which sometimes urges the ruffian to despoil a reputation, whose elements are beyond his acquisition. It is at all events most certain that his conduct was not dictated by that high-souled chivalry which so distinguishes the Naval officers of the land of my nativity, and renders their commissions their best introductions to the first societies abroad.

Secondly. Lieutenant Tattnell says I stated that the schooner was cut out immediately after Captain Turner had dined with the Governor. The notarial copy given in the preceding part of this pamphlet, is silent upon this head, and all must conclude that Lieutenant Tattnell fabricated the assertion for his special use at the time: how far such conduct comports with the character of an American officer and a gentleman, I leave to the reader to judge. In every approved code of honor, with which I am acquainted, *truth* is esteemed as a cardinal virtue, and such is the high value set upon it, that the individual known to be addicted to the utterance of its opposite, is always shunned as a *thing* too despicable to be tolerated amongst honorable men.

Thirdly—Lieutenant Tattnell, says:—

“The object of the statement is evidently to convey the idea that the most friendly intercourse had subsisted between the authorities and himself (Capt. Turner), and that he had taken advantage of the security in which he had lulled them to effect his object.”

After ascribing to me motives thus disreputable,—not one word of which is justified by my report—or even by the most perverted construction which can be put upon it—this modern *Munchausen* declares that “such an insinuation is as *basely false* as it is unjust.” As I made no such insinuation, the declaration of its falsehood does not affect me; I may, however, be permitted to observe, that an individual bearing the commission of an American Lieutenant, should be too proud of a service, justly honored, to resort to such wretched trickery to answer his own venal ends.

Not being satisfied with the answer of Lieut. *Tattnall*, to my first enquiry, I addressed him the following letter:

Baltimore, 13th Oct. 1831.

Sir,—I received yours of the 7th inst. in answer to my letter without date, wrote the 27th ult. I cannot consider your letter in full as a reply to mine. If you will give my letter an attentive perusal, you will find that the communication you speak of never came under my notice, nor in fact any other communication from you, which will account for my not replying to it. The object of my letter is to know whether you have written any thing derogatory to my character, relative to my cruise in the *Congresso*, and which Geo. Law alluded to as your being the author.

As you have thought proper to introduce the affair of the *Federal*, I will write to Savannah for a copy of your communication contradicting my "gross misstatements" respecting the capture of that vessel. I have only to state that in making out the statement which was published in the *Savannah Georgian*, of facts as I had received them, not officially, but from different individuals, whose statements all agreed at the time, I had no other motive in view than giving the statement as a piece of news; and, sir, I must inform you, that I know of nothing to justify a belief that any misstatement was made to which you allude.

Your last paragraph states, that much has been said against my general character. I am aware, that many hireling pens have been used to blacken my fair fame, but whilst I am justified by my government, (*Buenos Ayres*) and have been fully acquitted of the foul aspersions of anonymous slanderers, by the laws of this country, I feel myself under no "*personal apprehension*" (as you have been pleased to underscore the words) as to the result. Your ob't serv't,

JOHN CHASE.

To which he replied in the following taunting manner:

Middletown, Connecticut, 20th October, 1831.

Sir,—Your communication of the 13th inst. has been received. I considered that a reference to the only publication of mine into which your name had been introduced, was a sufficient answer to the enquiries contained in your first letter of the 27th ult.

I left it to yourself to draw your own conclusions from its perusal.

I knew nothing of your cruise in the *Congresso*, nor had ever heard of you until I had seen your name mentioned as *authority* for the publication in the *Georgian*, reflecting on the character of the U. S. Ship *Erie*.

I approve of Mr. Law's paragraph (as quoted by you), with the exception of the last word "dared," and my underscored expression "*personal apprehension*" was in allusion to that word, as I never had the vanity to suppose that any man stood in fear of me.

Why you did not notice my communication in the *Georgian*, was a matter which did not concern me, and which I never considered. That you may not have seen it, is probable.

From circumstances which it is unnecessary to mention, I wish my correspondence with you to be as short as possible.

I am, sir,

Your ob't serv't,

JOSIAH TATTNALL.

Capt. JOHN CHASE, Baltimore.

Having, in the mean time, received copies of my report and the communication of Lt. *Tattnall*, from Savannah, and ascertained by the tenor of that gentleman's correspondence with me, that I had nothing to expect from his magnanimity, and too much reason to believe that he was disposed to add insult to his former injury—with a view of bringing our correspondence to an end, I addressed him the following letter, and received the reply which follows it:—

Baltimore, 18th Nov. 1831.

Sir,—I have received the communication you caused to be published in the Savannah Georgian under date of 3d February, 1830, in answer to my statement in relation to the cutting out of the Federal at St. Barts, made in the same paper, 25th December, 1828, and I confess that I am at a loss to account for the base and unwarrantable attack you have made upon me. In your letter of the 20th October you acknowledge that you never knew me, nor never heard of me until you saw my name as authority for the publication in the Georgian, and yet you have unhesitatingly lavished abuse on me of the foulest kind. I have been long honorably engaged in the cause of South America, and feel happy that I have been able to assist that country in its struggles for liberty. I considered their cause our cause, and am sorry that you, an officer in the United States' Navy, should have been so gratuitous in your abuse. I stand as clear of the foul charges contained in your communication as you or any other man, and I cannot account for your slander, unless it was to substitute the *pen* of a defamer for your *sword*, to bring *yourself* into notice.

You say that I cast reflections on Capt. Turner. I deny it. Your own statement corroborates all the material facts contained in mine. You have put your own *false* constructions on *my* statement, and would justify yourself by them in your attack upon me; but, sir, the world will judge and condemn you.—As you directed the Editors of the Georgian to give up your name for any other purpose than “a newspaper paragraph,” I now invite you either to retract the slander you have published, or to give that satisfaction which the offence calls for. Should the latter be your course, you will please inform me when and where you may be found.

JOHN CHASE.

Lieut. TATTNALL, U. S. Navy.

Norfolk, Va. 14th December.

Sir,—Your communication of the 18th ult. was received at Middletown, but the necessity of referring to documents left among my papers at Norfolk, has prevented my replying to it sooner.

I shall not condescend to notice your retorts to my remarks in the *Georgian*. Nothing of that kind coming from a person of your character can deserve notice.

You were not entitled to the consideration of a reply to your two first communications, and I *did* reply because, having invited you three years since to notice my remarks in the *Georgian*, my silence might have been misconstrued by those who did not know me. That *you* might not mistake me, however, I took the precaution to state, that I had heard much said of your general character since that period, and that I wished our correspondence to be as short as possible.

I will not trouble myself to discuss the merits of your conduct and mine in our communications to the *Georgian*. It is sufficient for me that I *then* thought you merited all I said, and that I think so *now*.

At that time I only knew you as pursuing a business, the nature of which, and the motives which had generally induced American citizens to engage in it, were so notoriously infamous, that although solitary instances might be shewn of persons having engaged in it from honourable views, still the *general* infamy of the service justly subjected all to suspicion.

You, however, wore a foreign uniform, and held a commission under a flag recognised by our government, and had dared in our own ports to reflect upon the character of the U. S. ship *Erie*, and as I had *then* heard of no criminal act that you had committed, should have unhesitatingly met you had you called upon me.

If you neither saw nor heard of the imputations I cast upon you in the *Georgian*, it was no fault of mine. My remarks were forwarded to Savannah by the first mail after the receipt of yours at Pensacola, and published there immediately, a little more than a month (I think) after *your* communication appeared in the *Georgian*.

Three years, however, have since elapsed and circumstances connected with your character have transpired, which put it out of the question that I can ever meet you. On your return to Baltimore, a respectable grand jury found bills against you for piracy and other crimes, some of which are still pending—and even should you ultimately clear yourself from the whole of them, it is evident that I can never put myself on a footing with one whose character is so low that charges of such infamy could be conceived against him in his native city, where he and his occupations have been so long and so well known.

You moreover lately challenged Mr. George Law, of Baltimore, a gentleman of the first respectability, who refused to meet you on the ground that you were a perjured pirate, and that he held the proofs of your being so, inviting you at the same time, to test the truth of his accusation by a suit against him for slander.

Now, sir, under all these circumstances, I cannot in justice to the

service to which I belong, or to my station in society, accept a challenge from you, nor will I in justice to Mr. Law, for whom I entertain the highest respect, and to whom, in common with the officers of the Erie, I am indebted for his disinterested defence of us, when absent, against the aspersions of the officers of the piratical vessel the Federal, when you on the contrary [as I am told] were lending them your assistance.

Should any *respectable* man hand me a challenge from you and persist in doing so after reading the papers in my possession, I shall consider it a challenge from him, and give him a meeting.

Since my arrival here I have been informed from Baltimore that you had threatened to assault me. If you attempt it, I shall put you to death. I shall notice no further communications from you.

I am, Sir,

Your obt. servt.

JOSIAH TATTNALL.

CAPT. JOHN CHASE,
Baltimore.

The communication of Lieutenant Tattall concludes with these emphatic words, and I beg to call the reader's attention to them:

"If the author of the paragraph feels offended at the freedom of these remarks, and wishes the name of the author *for any purpose other than a newspaper controversy*, he can obtain it by calling on the editors.

After this *wager of battle*, so boastingly given by Lt. *Tattall*, I had a right to expect he would grant me a meeting—the character of *his* service—the chivalry of the south, seemed to stand forth the proud guaranties, that he had not merely thrown down the gauntlet of the braggart, without possessing the courage to redeem his own pledge, voluntarily given, when he should be required so to do. In this, however, I have been mistaken: for no sooner did I make the call than he wrapt himself up in *assumed importance*, and could not condescend to notice me in the *manner* which he had *himself pointed out*. But why am I *now* deemed unworthy of that *notice*, to which he *invited* me three years since? Though I am still a captain in the navy of Buenos Ayres, I have not been since engaged in active service; and have not, therefore, done any thing which could have changed the relation in which I then stood to Lieut. Tattall. At the time of replying to my *report*, he says he only knew me as "pursuing a business, the nature of which, "and the motives which had generally induced American citizens to "engage in it, were so notoriously infamous, that, although solitary in-

“stances might be shewn of persons having engaged in it from honorable views, still the *general* infamy of the service justly subjected all “to suspicion.”

The impudence of a lieutenant in the Navy of this country, speaking *thus* of the service of a government, recognized by his own as independent, and at which she has for years kept a *Charge d’Affaires*, is only equalled by the utter disregard of truth and injustice which characterises his aspersion of so brave a people—a people who, after enduring the most odious oppressions for centuries, nobly dared to encounter the perils of revolution, to free themselves from the grasp of tyranny, and to assume that station among the nations of the earth, to which they were so eminently entitled by their sufferings and their virtues.

But says he, I “wore a foreign uniform and held a commission under a flag recognized by our government, and had dared in our own ports to reflect upon the character of the U. S. ship *Erie*, and as he had *then* heard of no criminal act that I had committed, he should have unhesitatingly met me had I called upon him.”

This paragraph would not be now noticed by me, but for the desire I have of shewing the reader the obstinate tenacity with which this man adheres to one of the falsehoods he circulated against me. I did not reflect upon the character of the *Erie*, and so he knows full well; but acting on the maxim of a great political writer, he thinks a lie well told, and insisted on, will answer as well as the truth; but I trust there is too much integrity of purpose in the character of this people, to sustain an individual in so barefaced an attempt to swindle them out of their judgment.

But Lieutenant *Tattnall* cannot now give me satisfaction, because three years has elapsed since he injured me, and he has heard of the malicious slanders of *George Law*—because circumstances connected with (my) character have transpired! And what are those circumstances? “On (my) return to Baltimore, a respectable Grand Jury” he says found bills against me for “Piracy and other crimes;” with the respectability of a part of that jury I have nothing now to say, except to state a fact which was communicated to me by as “respectable” a member of it as was on the panel—a member of that Grand Jury, then, assured me, that they had *no* evidence against me but what was contained in an *anonymous* pamphlet signed “PUBLIC,” now generally believed to have been written by *George Law*, and other *anonymous*

communications. At the time this gentleman told me this *startling fact*, he named over several others, who together with himself, voted *against the finding of the bill*; asserting at the time, that there was *no evidence* before the jury. The gentlemen named to me, by my informant, rank among the most intelligent merchants, of our city. Connected with this jury, on which this man so much relies to cover his own want of courage, I will remark, that the jurors of our district courts are not exclusively composed of citizens of Baltimore, and that I have understood that one of those very *respectable* Grand Jurors gave \$25, towards a common fund, to employ additional counsel to aid in the prosecution of myself and others. The scrupulous *delicacy* of such a juror and his *impartiality* will certainly commend him no doubt to the admiration of the *brave* lieutenant Tattnall—who would kill you off a score of men—with his pen—any day in the year, in preference to encountering the danger of a single combat—who whenever the hour of peril comes, *slips his cable* out of mere motives of *humanity*. But to return to this Grand Jury—their bill for piracy was so far from being sustained by the *petit jury*, that I was acquitted without the jury leaving the box [see appendix No. 1.]—no evidence whatever being offered to sustain the charge against me. I was not in the country when those bills were found against me, being called to Buenos Ayres upon business with my government; but having heard of their existence, on my return to this country, I apprised the Marshal of my arrival on the instant I reached this port in one of the Eastern line of Steam-boats. And I would here premise that the incendiary fire-brand which *George Law* had thrown into this community, was too well calculated to deprive me of the chance of a fair trial, had there been the slightest testimony against me—the boldness with which the charge of piracy was preferred—the outrages and enormities so plausibly detailed in the pamphlet—the impenetrable veil of secrecy which its author had thrown around himself, all tended to increase the excitement, and to poison the wholesome fountains of justice. Under such circumstances it was thought to be an act of hardihood in me to hazard the consequences of a trial; but, “*thrice armed is he whose cause is just.*” I submitted myself to the fiery ordeal, against all those fearful odds, and a jury of as honorable and intelligent men as ever decided the guilt or innocence of an individual, [see Philip Moore’s certificate, Appendix No. 2,] gave me an honorable acquittal.

As to the other indictment still resting against me, I have been here,

absent from my government for two years courting a trial—it is on a charge of misdemeanor, for the alleged offence of fitting out a vessel, and thus violating the neutrality act. Of its fate, I have no apprehensions; but as I have purposely abstained from noticing the many falsehoods uttered against me in the pamphlet of “*Public*,” lest I might prejudice the case pending against me, I shall no further notice it, at this time, than to put in, as I shall upon my trial, the *general plea*, of “*not guilty*.” But why I and a few others should be selected as victims under the neutrality law, is to me inscrutable, upon any other ground, than that *George Law*, the reputed author of “*Public*,” felt himself justified by his own *peculiar* circumstances, to create an excitement, which should, in its magnitude, *drown* the hue and cry which was raised by his *creditors* just about that time, against himself.

Lieutenant *Tattnall* says that I lately challenged “Mr. *George Law* of Baltimore, a gentleman of the first respectability, who refused to meet me on the ground of my being “a perjured pirate.” As to the refusal of this very “*respectable gentleman*,” I will only say, that, after making a positive engagement, to make a communication to my friend, in answer to my call to the field, at Gadsby’s hotel, in Washington, at ten o’clock on the morning of the 18th of March, he violated that pledge, *absconded* from the District, taking care before his departure, to bind over myself and a friend, to keep the peace towards him. At one of the interviews which my friend had with *Law*, with apparent courtesy, he observed to that friend, that if he was fully acquainted with my character, and knew all the circumstances, he did not think he would have engaged in the business. My friend replied, that he was fully aware of the responsibility which he had assumed, and that he would ENDORSE for the character of his principal. This intimation doubtless caused Mr. *Law* to resort to the subterfuge of asking time, till the next day, to make his communication. By his *secret* and *dastardly* departure from Washington, he proved that he, like *Snug*, and his prototype *Lieutenant Tattnall, of the United States’ Navy*, although decorated with the skin of a Lion, could not enact the part of that noble animal. Cowardice is sometimes the constitutional inheritance of men—where it is so, they are objects of pity and commiseration; but if *such* will put on the port of right valiant chevaliers, their weakness should awaken no other feeling than that of contempt and detestation.

Lieutenant Tattnall is much indebted to Mr. *Law* for his disinter-

ested defence of himself and the officers of the "piratical vessel, the Federal." What I am now about to say I do not wish to be considered as applying to any of the officers of the Erie, save Lt. *Tattnall*; but so far as he is concerned, I will affirm, that *Mr. George Law* was a most congenial defender of such a man—like him he has a most *valorous pen*; but like him, he lacks the nerve to give satisfaction as a gentleman, and does not possess the magnanimity to withdraw charges which he knows to be *false and malicious*. But if I am not mistaken as to dates, at the very moment when *George Law* was championing the cause of Lt. *Josiah Tattnall*, he was *concealed at his lodgings to evade the search of his creditors*—and this same *George Law* is now again *invisible* for a similar reason—allegations being ready to be filed, if not already filed, against him. That all men may know how choice a friend Lt. *Tattnall* has taken to his bosom, I will here remark, that *Law* rests under the imputation of having defrauded his creditors out of \$70,000. Now verily this man is a most admirable *corrector of morals*, and if men are to be judged by their companions, Licut. *Tattnall* has shewn great discretion in his selection of a friend—at all events, two more *deer-like* hearts never animated human frames. But Lieutenant *Tattnall* thinks I should have *sued* Mr. Law, who invited me to test the truth of his accusations in a suit against him. This is, indeed, most ridiculous! Why did not Mr. Law test the truth of *his* accusations against *me*, while I was undergoing the trial for *piracy*? Mr. Wirt's letter shews that no evidence was offered to the jury against me. But since this *valorous* Lieutenant *Tattnall* will have me sue *George Law*, then, I will tell him, that I did sue him, and with the Deputy Marshal of the District of Columbia, pursued him as far as the White House, but not being able to find the *retreating* gentleman, gave up the pursuit. I caused the action to be brought in a moment of irritation, immediately after being bound over by him; but a few hours reflection convinced me it would be as futile to sue a *dishonorable bankrupt*, as it would be to expect, that an *honorable* draught on Lieutenant *Tattnall*, would meet with any thing but shuffling and *evasion*. A word or two as to one of the witnesses of *George Law*, and his consort, *Josiah Tattnall*. *John Stewart*, the seaman who figures so conspicuously in the pamphlet of *Law*, was in prison at the time for *theft*—has subsequently been *convicted* of it—asked, and, I believe, obtained a new trial, but before the day of trial arrived, *broke jail*, and thus evaded the justice of the country and a residence in the penitentiary.

But why should Lieutenant Tattnall plume himself upon *his superiority*? he does not outrank me—he is but a Lieutenant in the U. S. Navy—and I hold a commission as Captain in that of Buenos Ayres, a government not only recognised by this, but at which a diplomatic agency of high rank is kept up. If he has perilled his life in behalf of this, his native country—I have done the same.—During the war between this country and England, though then but a youth, as second officer of the *Syren* Privateer, after the Captain and first officer had been killed, I captured, in the British Channel, by boarding, his Majesty's ship, the *Landrail*, greatly our superior. In the early part of that action I received a ball in my thigh, which still remains there, to my great discomfort. The subsequent battles of that vessel, in which I was first officer, are well known—Of her defence when carried by the boats of the enemy's squadron off the Delaware, it may not become me to speak. The war at an end, I entered into the Navy of the government of Buenos Ayres, and continued faithful to her interests during the whole of her struggles, while the services of her Naval Marine were required. That she is satisfied with my deportment, and properly appreciates it, I have had ample testimony—and, that, in the performance of my duty, I have been influenced by higher considerations than “pecuniary exactions,” may be seen by the testimonials in the appendix. Whatever others may think of it, I shall ever rank among the proudest reminiscences of my life, that I have been able to do the state of Buenos Ayres “some service,” and that in my *own ship of war*, I bore to this country the first Minister from one of the young republics of the Southern hemisphere. From a long continued and arduous service among them, I can speak of the people of that country, as I have found them—brave, intelligent and chivalric; and if civil strife, too incident, perhaps, to unchastened military ambition, has thus far served to postpone its tranquility and repose, an enlarged patriotism would cast none other than the eye of regret over the misfortunes of a people, so deserving of the enjoyment of freedom. *Hancock* and *Adams* were outlawed by the tyrant who oppressed their country, and as far as that act could carry a moral force with it, they were attempted to be rendered infamous; but disgrace could not attach to patriotism so pure—to hearts so truly brave. *Josiah Tattnall*, Esquire, a lieutenant in the United States' navy, who indites mock heroics equal to *Nick Bottom*, the *Weaver*, whose immortality was secured by the Bard of Avon, has denounced the service of Buenos Ayres to be one

of "*general infamy*," because a few bad men may have abused its flag—but in despite of *his* formidable denunciation—the Republic of Buenos Ayres, will live on, and be honored in story, when the name of *Josiah Tattnall*, if it should be recollected at all, will be only remembered like that of the Ephesian—for its *infamy*—for having been the defamer of a nation while it was yet bleeding in the cause of liberty—for having, in a moment of *pot-gallantry*, had the *courage* to traduce another's character, with the *show* of battle, and when called upon, sought impunity in a way which a brave man would have spurned.

The man of genuine courage, and real worth, never violates another's feelings without well-defined cause; nor does he insult him and seek security in self-conceived superiority—No! when the brave man feels himself called upon to manifest his displeasure, it is done under the full determination to answer the consequences in a manner which shall preserve his honor from even *suspicion*. But it is idle to talk of the course which a brave man would pursue—when the object of my remarks is *Josiah Tattnall*,—a man dead to all generous or ennobling sentiments—who would rather earn a reputation with the *pen* of *Troilus* than with the sword of an American hero. This same *Josiah Tattnall*, who says, had I challenged him *three years* ago he would have fought me, now says, should "any respectable man" hand him a challenge from me, that he will give him a meeting. Does he suppose that an honorable man could send his friend under such circumstances? Would a brave, high-minded man thus entrench himself? But what assurance is the word of such a man that he would comply with his present promise? he gave his *written pledge* before, and the very *first* opportunity I had of testing his sincerity, he proved *recreant* to honor and to truth. His friend *Law* fled like a felon from Washington, and circumstances are deceptive, if *Josiah Tattnall*, in his transit through this city, did not, after coming to the conclusion, if I should assault him, of putting me to death, date his letter at Norfolk, though written here. It bears date "*Norfolk, Va. 14 Dec.*" and the *Baltimore post mark*, of "*Dec. 19.*" It was probably intended as the effort of the flying Parthian, who had not sufficient courage to witness the effect of his own poisoned shaft: and if I am to judge by the *tremulous* hand with which he *penned* my name, after registering his edict, I should come to the conclusion that the bare thought of his *bloody* intention, had played sad work with his nerves.

I am done with *Josiah Tattnall*, for the present, and after asking

pardon of the public for thus trespassing upon their attention with my private grievances (which I would much rather have settled in another way,) I pray them to believe that nothing but the most acute sense of my wrongs could have induced this appeal.

From a deference to the rules of propriety, I have remained silent under all the opprobrium cast upon me by *George Law*, in his pamphlet signed "*Public*," a production, so far as I am concerned, I here declare to be wholly slanderous and untrue. Of the public I ask nothing but justice,—that is alike due to the lacerated feelings of my family and to my own injured honor. When the case still pending against me shall have been determined, I will shew to this community, and to the world, that the *morals* of the author of "*Public*" is no better than those of the *convicted felon* upon whose testimony, he dared to disturb the peace and quiet of an unoffending family—to traduce and villify—from mere wantonness—and had the audacity to invoke the temple of justice to lend itself to the gratification of his demoniac purposes. Till then, I ask of this people—of my countrymen, by birth and adoption—not to condemn one who has devoted seventeen years of the prime and vigor of his life to the cause of his country and of liberty—upon the testimony of such men as *Josiah Tattnall* and *George Law*—*par nobile fratrum*—or the still more infamous being, upon whose *declaration* the latter based his charge against me.

In conclusion, I pronounce **JOSIAH TATTNALL**, a Lieutenant in the Navy of the United States, to be a calumniator without provocation, an officer without courage, and a man without honor.

JOHN CHASE,
Captain Buenos Ayrean Navy.

BALTIMORE, Jan. 6, 1832.

APPENDIX.

[1]

Washington, March 16, 1831.

Capt. John Chase was under an indictment for piracy at the last Circuit Court of Maryland, held at Baltimore. I am one of the counsel retained to defend him. The cause was submitted to a jury, more, it seemed to me, as a matter of form, than with any expectation on the part of the District Attorney that any evidence could be offered to substantiate the charge. It is certain that none was offered which had the slightest bearing of that sort. The jury did not leave their box, and, indeed, I understood the prosecution to be virtually abandoned by the District Attorney. The verdict was one of acquittal, and the public sentiment, as far as I heard it expressed, was that the prosecution had no colour of foundation in the evidence. I give this certificate as an act of justice to Capt. Chase, and at his request.

WILLIAM WIRT.

[2]

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

DISTRICT OF MARYLAND—TO WIT:

The United States, { Presentment and Indictment for Piracy—Plea,
vs. {
John Chase. { Not Guilty, and Issue.

JURY SWORN—TO WIT:

David Clendennin, William Stewart, John Patterson, William J. Patterson, William R. Stuart, Cæcilius C. Jamison, Thomas Mezick, James Corner, John Carrere, Charles Jones, Jonathan Warner, Thomas Hillen.

Verdict, NOT GUILTY. Judgment on the Verdict.

I, PHILIP MOORE, Clerk of the Circuit Court of the United States for the Fourth Circuit, in and for the Maryland District, do hereby certify, that the foregoing is a true extract from the record and proceedings of the said Circuit Court.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I hereunto subscribe my name and affix
{ L.S. } the seal of the said Circuit Court, this fourteenth day of
{ } June, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and thirty.

PHILIP MOORE, *Clk.*
Cirt. Ct.

[3]

Washington City, June 5, 1826.

OFFICE OF THE COLONIZATION SOCIETY.

[Extract from their minutes.]

Resolved, That he (Dr. Woodside) be requested to convey to Captains Chase and Cottrell, of the Colombian Navy, the expression of the thanks of this Board for their valuable co-operation with the Colonial Agent in forwarding the interests of the Colony, with the assurance of the sincerity with which those services are acknowledged and the pleasure with which the memory of them will be cherished.

R. R. GURLEY, *Res. Agt.*J. W. CAMPBELL, *P. B. M.*JNO. UNDERWOOD, *Rec. Sec.*

Extract from the letter of R. R. Gurley, Resident Agent of the Colonization Society, to John Chase.

“Sir—I have the honor to present to you in the name of the Board of Managers of the American Colonization Society, their unfeigned thanks for the important services so generously rendered by you to their Colonial Agent in Liberia, and particularly for the very liberal contributions of arms and other valuable articles which you have been pleased to make to their African Colony.”

* * * * *

“Such conduct is worthy of a brave officer of the leading Republic of the South.”

* * * * *

“Very honorable mention is made of your services in a letter from Mr. Ashman, which you will find published in the African Repository for August, 1826.”

* * * * *

“The assistance which you so generously rendered to Mr. Ashman, is also mentioned in our fourth Annual Report.”

[ERRATUM—In the 9th line, of page 5, for “St. Mary’s,” read “St. Martin’s.”]



